



RWD &  
THE ART  
OF TRAVEL

RWD DOES NOT STAND FOR "RIGHT WHEEL DRIVE" IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS STORY, BUT ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC EMERGING FORCES IN YACHT DESIGN: REDMAN WHITELEY DIXON.

BY MARTIN REDMAYNE



I have known RWD's three partners - Justin Redman, Mark Whiteley and Tony Dixon - since the early 90's, when they embarked on their illustrious and award-winning career. The observation I have made is that they are all genuinely relaxed and fun-loving, as well as having an uncommon flair and talent for a variety of disciplines.

To describe RWD as an 'emerging force' is not to say that they are new to the market, but with youth on their side there is plenty more in the tank when it comes to sheer energy and the drive to push boundaries. Such motoring metaphors seem appropriate, given their annual

classic car rally to the Monaco Yacht Show, known as the RWD Tour. Clients, shipyards, fellow designers, partners and friends take a leisurely tour from Beaulieu in Hampshire, all the way through the French countryside to Casino Square in Monaco, arriving the night before the show starts. Justin Redman who extends the invitation far and wide to the great and good, adds that "Jonathan Beckett, CEO of Burgess is always too busy to join us - but he is always welcome, one day we'll get him on board!"



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**THERE IS A FRESH, YOUNG ENERGY THAT EXUDES FROM THE THREE PARTNERS AND THEIR TALENTED TEAM.**

The on-going relationship between Burgess and the RWD team has stretched for many years over some exceptional new construction projects, including the second ICON build, Baton Rouge, the recently delivered Galileo G and Seanna as well as a much-anticipated 96 metre new build due for delivery in 2012.

What is most striking is the diversity that the RWD portfolio seems to deliver whether they are turning their hands to external profiles or internal comfort. One reason may be that the three partners have built a talented team around them, including Toby Ecuyer, creative director since 2007. This means that RWD can take on more work without compromising either their originality or their standards. Looking back at yachts like Ilona from Amels through to the recent award-winning Royal Huisman ketch Twizzle, shows the diverse design scope RWD are capable of.

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STANDING IN A SECURITY HUT AT ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE IN THE USA, SHELTERING FROM THE FREEZING RAIN IN TOTAL DARKNESS, HANDS ON HEADS AND MACHINE GUNS COCKED, WITH AN ALSATIAN SNIFFING THE PARTS ALL DOGS SEEM TO BE TRAINED TO SNIFF...



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**THEIR APPRECIATION OF THE ART OF THE JOURNEY ENABLES THEM TO DRAW EFFORTLESSLY A CURVE OR LINE THAT SUGGESTS ELEGANCE AND SPEED.**

A recent tour of the latest De Vries-built Lady Britt, demonstrated their approach clearly, with the owner commenting on how much fun it had been working with them, and how their interpretation of what he wanted was spot on. I suppose that if you are going to build your perfect yacht, you want the right chemistry with your designer. When you meet the three personalities that make up the R, the W and the D, it is likely that you will click with at least one of the trio.

RWD have energy in bucket loads and they are always on the move - our diaries never crossed to have that promised lunch at their new local boutique hotel, Limewood! I finally caught up with the guys towards the end of the year, to explore what makes them tick, where they have been and where they are heading.

They refer to yacht design in a way that makes you think, it must be fun to create a project. "Travel and the Art of Travel are fundamental to yacht design", they explain. "Not only is it paramount that comfort and style are in complete harmony, but the enjoyment of the journey must be special, in fact memorable!" Anyone who has been on the RWD Tour will know that these boys understand how to get the most out of a journey.

It is this ethos that seems to drive them to do something a little bit special. As designers, travel is a key part of their lives too. They have endless anecdotes, many including the Burgess team, alongside whom they have been on some very interesting journeys with some very interesting people. One of the most memorable involved standing in a security hut at Andrews Air Force Base in the USA, sheltering from the freezing rain in total darkness, hands on heads and machine guns cocked, with an Alsatian sniffing the parts all dogs seem trained to sniff. They were waiting to board a vast private Airbus for the second part of their circumnavigation, trying to track down a client for a significant and ultimately successful presentation. Justin Redman muses: "Only Burgess could get us into this scenario - it was typical of the many interesting times that they seem to lead us into!"

The process of creating a yacht with RWD has some unique dimensions. The lack of ego from the trio, and the consistent mantra quoted throughout the team - "there must be a better way of doing things?" - conspire to ensure that they challenge themselves, the yards and the team to build excellence into the mix.

They seek to create magnificence in the way that classical architects of old would seek to build a personal statement for their client. But that is not to suggest they are old school. Far from it. This youthful team oozes a dynamism and energy that allows them to create into the early hours - their passion and desire to build something special seems to carry them forward like the iconic Ferraris, Aston Martins and Rolls-Royces that cruise down through France en route to Monaco every September.

RWD have travelled a long way from their humble beginnings in London, a short step from the yacht design mecca of Bannenberg's studio just off the King's Road, to their current home on the Beaulieu River, a short hop from the sailing mecca of Cowes on the Isle of Wight. Driven yet playful, relentless yet relaxed, they can look forward to many more interesting times with interesting clients.